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National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: George Kolt  
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SUBJECT: Some Further Thoughts on Ogarkov

1. I thought the NID/PDB analysis was very good. Here are some additional thoughts within the framework of that analysis:

- Ogarkov's stature had risen notably over the last year.
- Although this rise in stature was, as far as we can tell, accomplished within the rules laid down by the party, it is possible that it had become worrisome to Politburo members at a time when they were jockeying for position in the next succession. They may have had a common interest in ensuring that Ogarkov, and by extension the military, played no role in that jockeying.
- Even if this was the motivation, the decision was probably justified on other grounds, as suggested by the NID analyst.

It is also possible that Gorbachev ~~had~~ sprung a trap on Ogarkov. He may have acceded to the long standing military demands for decreasing its support of the harvest and might now have laid the blame on Ogarkov for the poor harvest and the hard currency expenditures associated with it. This maneuver would support the theory of Gorbachev being a smooth . . . s.o.b.

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-- What will happen to Ogarkov now?

- He could become a member of the General Inspector Corps. This would be a clear demotion and probably the end of his career.
- He still could become Minister of Defense, which would create an entirely new situation.
- A more intriguing possibility is that he could become Commander of Soviet Forces in Afghanistan. This would get him out of Moscow during the succession period but make him eligible to come back sometime in the future. The short-term implications for us, however, would be very serious. We would now have a very intelligent, energetic and probably more aggressive military commander in that country. The fear of Soviet action against Pakistan would rightly increase. At best Soviet actions in the region would become less predictable.

-- Whatever his next job, I don't think we can count Ogarkov out completely yet. The situation in Moscow is too confused and the jockeying most likely too intense to allow final conclusions. The sequel to Red Square may have only begun!

  
George Kolt

cc. Fritz Ermentrath

Herb Meyer 

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